

NEPA/404 MERGER TEAM DISCUSSION

TIP Project Nos. U-2525B and C
WBS Nos. 34821.1.3 and 34821.1.4

Greensboro Eastern Urban Loop
From US 70 Relocation to SR 2303 (Lawndale Drive)
Guilford County

Project Description and Brief History

The Greensboro Eastern Urban Loop is a pipeline project for which the environmental documents were completed before the NEPA/404 Merger process was initiated. Information concerning the documents' approval dates is listed below:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) | August 19, 1992 |
| • Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) | August 12, 1994 |
| • Record of Decision (ROD) | March 7, 1995 |

The proposed action for the FEIS is the construction of the Greensboro Eastern Urban Loop, a multi-lane freeway. The proposed limits are from north of the interchange with I-85 and the proposed I-85 Bypass to Lawndale Drive north of Greensboro. The project is approximately 12.1 miles in length. The selected alternative is the Middle Alternative. This alternative and its anticipated impacts are fully discussed in the DEIS and abbreviated FEIS. A portion of this project, U-2525A, has already been constructed.

The main purposes of the proposed Greensboro Eastern Urban Loop are to provide an efficient circumferential connection for major arterial thoroughfares such as I-85, I-40, US 29 and US 70; and to improve service for local traffic in Eastern and Northern Greensboro/Guilford County. The project will also connect to other portions of the planned Greensboro Urban Loop.

A meeting was held in the summer of 2005 to discuss how this project should be integrated into the NEPA/404 Merger process. North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE), Division of Water Quality (DWQ) and State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) staff attended this meeting. The group agreed that since Segment A of the project (U-2525A) had been constructed in the late 1990's, the possibility of utilizing the other alternatives was limited. The group agreed that the Middle Alternative should be the LEDPA by elimination. The group agreed that the project should enter the NEPA/404 Merger process at Concurrence Point 2A/4A. A CP2A/4A field meeting was held in January 2006, and the Concurrence Point 2A/4A meeting for U-2525B and U-2525C was held in April 2006. A Concurrence Point 4B meeting for U-2525B was held in September 2008. In February 2010, a Concurrence Point 4A Revisit for the Greensboro Eastern Urban Loop / US 29 interchange (new interchange design and Quail Oaks neighborhood avoidance shift) was completed.

Kerenoff Neighborhood Service Road Redesign Background

The U-2525 corridor protection maps were filed with the Register of Deeds office in Guilford County back in the Mid 1990's. US 29 was designated as a future interstate route, future I-785, somewhere between 2000 and 2005. The US 29 / Hicone Road interchange design shown on the corridor protection maps was redesigned to meet interstate design criteria, and this redesign affected the Kerenoff neighborhood service road's design as well.

At the October 18, 2010 public hearing, several residents living in the Kerenoff neighborhood near Birch Ridge Road and the US 29 / Hicone Road interchange asked if NCDOT would use the service road design shown on the 1996 corridor protection maps (see Figure 1) instead of the service road design shown on the current hearing maps. The residents said that getting out of their neighborhood onto US 29 is dangerous, and they are delayed for long periods of time. The 1996 design allowed residents to make left turns from Skylark Road onto Hicone Road to access US 29 by using the interchange. Representatives from NCDOT explained that the new design requires Hicone Road to be widened to four lanes with a raised median, and Skylark Road will be limited to right in/right out movements. The control of access limits along Hicone Road would need to be longer than the limits shown on the 1996 maps. NCDOT prepared two new service road design alternatives (see Figures 2 and 3 for Alternatives 1 and 2) that will improve access to US 29 for the residents of the Kerenoff neighborhood. A neighborhood meeting will be held once the Merger team concurs with the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative and avoidance and minimization measures for the service road.

Service Road Study Area Information

Water resources in the service road study area are part of the Cape Fear River basin [United States Geological Survey (USGS) Hydrologic Unit 03030002]. No wetlands were found within the study area. Three streams were identified in the study area (see Table 1). The location of these water resources are shown in Figure 4. UT to Reedy Fork, Stream SA, is classified as ephemeral (non-jurisdictional) from its ending point shown on Figure 4 to Hicone Road; therefore, service road Alternative 1 does not impact Stream SA.

Table 1. Water resources in the study area

Stream Name	Map ID	DWQ Index Number	Best Usage Classification	Classification	Impact Length (LF) *	
					Alt. 1	Alt. 2
UT to Reedy Fork	SA	16-11-(9)	C; NSW	Perennial	0	147
UT to Reedy Fork	SA	16-11-(9)	C; NSW	Intermittent	0	291
UT to Reedy Fork	SB	16-11-(9)	C; NSW	Intermittent	0	15
UT to Reedy Fork	SC	16-11-(9)	C; NSW	Perennial	170	170
Total					170 LF	623 LF

*Impact lengths are based on preliminary slope stake limits plus 25 feet.

No High Quality Waters (HQW), Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW), WS-II, or WS-I waters occur within 1.0 mile of the project study area. Additionally, no streams

within the project study area support trout or anadromous fish and no Primary Nursing Areas are present within the study area boundaries. Reedy Fork (Hardy's Mill Pond) and its unnamed tributaries in the study area are listed on the North Carolina 2010 Final 303(d) list of impaired waters due to fecal coliform and zinc standard violations. All streams were dry during the survey period due to prolonged drought experienced in the area.

As of September 22, 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists the small whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*) as the only federally protected species for Guilford County. Surveys for small whorled pogonia were conducted on June 22, 2011 in areas of suitable habitat. No specimens were found. A review of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) database on June 20, 2011, indicated no occurrences of small whorled pogonia within one mile of the project study area. Therefore, the biological conclusion of 'No Effect' was determined for small whorled pogonia which will remain valid for five years.

Three homes will be relocated in order to construct service road Alternative 1 and service road Alternative 2. Service road Alternative 2 passes through the wooded area of an active agricultural operation, the Rudd strawberry farm, near Hicone Road. There are no properties on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and there are no archaeological resources within the service road study areas. There is a church and cemetery located on Aldine Road within the service road study areas, but no graves should be impacted. No notably adverse community impacts are anticipated with this project, and no Environmental Justice populations appear to be affected; thus, impacts to minority and low income populations do not appear to be disproportionately high and adverse.

Existing traffic noise does not create impacts to noise-sensitive land uses in the vicinity of the proposed Hicone Road / US 29 interchange improvements. All Design Year 2030 traffic noise impacts are predicted to occur as a result of loudest-hour equivalent noise levels that will meet or exceed NCDOT Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) thresholds. The predicted number of traffic noise impacts in the vicinity of the proposed Hicone Road / US 29 southwest interchange quadrant are: No-Build: 7 impacts, Alternative 1: 3 impacts, and Alternative 2: 3 impacts. The number of Build impacts is less than the number of No-Build impacts because several properties will be acquired for project right-of-way. The impacts listed include traffic noise generated from US 29, the US 29 southbound exit and entrance ramps, and Hicone Road. Zero (0) Build alternative traffic noise impacts are predicted to occur in the vicinity of the service road improvements.

Consideration for noise abatement measures was given to all impacted receptors. While densely-spaced traffic noise impacts can increase the likelihood of providing noise abatement measures, such measures will not be feasible in the vicinity of the proposed improvements due to the completely unlimited control of access to the proposed service road. Furthermore, construction noise impacts may occur due to the close proximity of numerous noise-sensitive receptors to project construction activities.

No traffic noise abatement measures considered in this traffic noise analysis will meet the reasonable and feasible criteria detailed in the NCDOT Traffic Noise Abatement Policy. Consequently, no traffic noise abatement measures are recommended and no noise abatement measures are proposed for incorporation into the project plans. It is the recommendation of this traffic noise analysis that all reasonable efforts should be made to minimize exposure of noise-sensitive areas to construction noise impacts through project special provisions.

The impacts for the two service road designs are included in Table 2 below showing impacts to various resources.

Table 2. Resource Impacts in the Service Road study area

Resource	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Homes	3	3
Wetlands	0	0
Streams	170 LF	623 LF

Avoidance and Minimization

In order to minimize impacts to the human environment, NCDOT redesigned the Kerenoff neighborhood service road to improve their access to US 29 while minimizing impacts to the natural environment as well.

Listed below are avoidance and minimizations measures that have been utilized and considered:

- Horizontal and vertical alignment adjustments, as well as slope adjustments, were made to avoid and minimize impacts.
- Existing roads were utilized as much as possible to avoid and minimize impacts.